

The Cumberland Conservation Commission (CCC) met on June 14 at 6:40pm at the Arnold Mills Community House, 75 Hillside Rd., Cumberland with George Gettinger presiding. In attendance were Julie Guerin, Julie Medeiros, Mike Scalzi, Greg Myers, and Dick Morrissey. Also attending were Mr. Philip Trevvett, Ms Cassie Tharinger, Mr. Chris Ratcliff and Ms Deborah Vine Smith.

Minutes: Minutes from the May meeting were approved.

Treasurer's report: Members voted to donate the remaining account balance after all expenses have been paid equally between the Franklin Farm Colonial Garden and the Blackstone Valley Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone for cemetery maintenance. Dr. Gettinger reported that the budget for the upcoming year has been approved for the same amount as this year.

Old Business

Photo Contest – Dr. Gettinger reported that judging has been completed. One winner was chosen in each division and three honorable mention photos were chosen overall. Winners will be notified by Dr. Gettinger and invited to the awards presentation at the Town Council meeting on Wed., June 22. The Valley Breeze will publish the winning photos on Thurs., June 21. Members voted to award gift certificates to the local Blackstone Valley Outfitters retail store as prizes. Over 60 photos were submitted, which is less than

last year but still offered a large selection from which to choose.

Monastery trails – Mr. Morrissey reported that he will follow up with John Aubin, Director of Planning on new software that is available to potentially map the trails. He also plans to continue working on the Town Council presentation over the summer with members' input as needed.

Emerson property – Dr. Gettinger reported that the meeting held on Wednesday, May 23 at the Town Hall was a success. Along with Lisa Primiano, Deputy Chief in the Division of Planning and Development at the Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM), representatives from the CCC, Land Trust, town administration, and abutters attended. Information from the DEM on enhancing the usability of the Emerson property with parking areas was presented. Dr. Gettinger began the meeting with a slide presentation of photos from the property.

Two outcomes from the meeting were: 1) A site visit to the property was needed to determine the optimal location for parking, which would prevent the need to cross Diamond Hill Rd. The visit took place on May 31st. In attendance were a DEM engineer, Mr. Morrissey, Mr. Lang, an abutter, and representatives from the Cumberland Land Trust. 2) A management plan is to be written, and will be initiated by the CCC.

Ms Guerin will send an email to Lisa Primiano of the DEM thanking her for her efforts on this project, and to recommend the use of permeable pavement materials for the parking area.

Franklin Farm – Ms Guerin reported that the fields have been planted. Planting Day with the Middle School students on Thursday, May 24 was very productive and informative, with members and guests speaking about related topics.

Dry Lands Bill Legislation S2616, H7866 – Mr. Scalzi reported the good news that the legislation died in committee in both the House and the Senate.

New Business

Land Acquisition for a Commercial Orchard in Cumberland – Mr. Philip Trevvett and Ms Cassie Tharinger gave an informative presentation on how the historic art of craft-based cider making is making a resurgence in New England, and their interest in starting a business of making apple cider and related products. They have already planted over 40 varieties of cider apple trees following organic practices at two separate locations in Rhode Island and are interested in procuring farm property in the state for this use with the additional goal of keeping farm and orchard lands viable for traditional uses. They requested the support of the CCC as a partner in identifying potential farm property available for purchase.

Members agreed to keep them informed of properties that would be appropriate for this purpose, and wished them well in their endeavors.

Diamond Hill Park – Both Mr. Chris Ratcliffe and Ms Deborah Vine-Smith attended the meeting to express their concerns about the recent proposed changes at Diamond Hill Park, specifically filling in the pond in order to create a larger venue for bands and paving the parking areas. Mr. Ratcliffe indicated that he already argued against using the park as a venue for bands to the town administration, and recommended that the management plan that was developed when the state turned the park over to the town should be followed. He will forward a copy of the plan to CCC members for their review.

Mr. Ratcliffe also indicated that there is a question about whether the pond is man-made or naturally-occurring. There are aerial photographs of the area from different years which Mr. Ratcliffe will share when he has obtained copies from the Dept. of Administration, Statewide Planning office. Mr. Scalzi also offered to research the history of the pond with the Dept. of Transportation.

Ms Vine Smith had communicated concerns about the impact on wildlife from filling in the pond (specifically frogs and dragonflies), and suggestions for permeable paving options to Ms Guerin. Ms Guerin compiled them in a document for review at the meeting.

Members agreed with all stated concerns. Ms Guerin will email the document to members, and contact Mr. Michael Crowley, Director of the Parks Department with the suggestions for permeable paving as well as the concerns about the impact on wildlife.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie M. Guerin

Secretary